

***Discovery As It Relates to Employment:  
Realizing Potential Through Employment***

**Overview**

Through the Tennessee Employment Consortium (TEC), the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD), the Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation Services (DMRS) and the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) are interested in building the capacity of Tennessee DMRS Providers of Day Services to structure time in community-based day services<sup>1</sup> in a manner that leads to an increase in the number of people served by DMRS who are in competitive, integrated employment. This structuring of services is called *Discovery As It Relates to Employment*.

For the purposes of this application, employment shall be defined as: “Employment is paid work based on competitive wages and benefits commensurate to the job and responsibilities, occurring in an integrated community setting and encouraging a person to work to his/her maximum choice and potential. Categories of employment include individual jobs, self-employment, work crews and enclaves. The goal is minimum wage or higher, however an individual may work and earn less, based on how the specific job is developed. Work in a sheltered workshop is not considered as employment.”

Pending the availability of funding, it is estimated that two awards of approximately \$60,000 each will be made. Applicants must qualify under *Eligibility Criteria*.

Each award must commit to train a minimum of 150 staff in *Discovery As It Relates to Employment*. Each award will be expected, at minimum, to provide training and technical assistance to a total of 8 agencies. The 8 agencies will be the result of a combination of Individual Support Coordination Agencies (ISCs) and DMRS Providers of Day Services. Each of the 150 people will be expected to receive regular and ongoing training and technical assistance on *Discovery As It Relates to Employment* during the span of the project.

One applicant can apply for both awards; however, the proposal must serve two DMRS regions. If one applicant applies for both awards, the applicant will need to commit to train a minimum of 300 staff and 16 agencies.

Developing and implementing a strategy to promote clear and regular communication between the person, their Circle of Support, ISC Agencies, residential staff, employment staff, community-based staff, and facility-based staff will be the key to the success of this model.

Projects will be responsible for working with DMRS, DRS and CDD to develop and deliver training and technical assistance to ISC Agencies and DMRS Providers of Day Services.

---

<sup>1</sup> Requirements related to day services can be described in three distinct categories: employment-based day services, community-based day services and facility-based day services.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be an applicant, an organization must meet all of the following:

- Be a current Tennessee DMRS Provider of Day Services and have been such for a minimum of 4 years.<sup>2</sup>
- At least 20% of the people the applicant supports who are DMRS service recipients and who are supported by the applicant in Day Services must be in community, integrated employment. The data source for the employment rate can be from either the *DMRS 2007 Employment Data Report* or by data supplied with the application. In the case where the applicant supplies the data, the raw data must be at least as recent as October 2007 and be supplied with the application. Applicants must specify the period of time represented by the employment data and the number of people supported by the applicant in Day Services for this same time period. Data must include the place of employment for each person, average hours per week worked and their hourly wage.<sup>3</sup> Provide data in a chart.

### **Funding**

***Total Anticipated Available Funding: \$120,000***

***Maximum Number of Anticipated Awards Available: 2***

***Anticipated Average Award: \$60,000***

***An applicant applying for both awards only has to submit one application.***

***Anticipated Project Period: October 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009; Depending on the availability of funding, additional funding may be available for 2009 – 2010.***

***Notice of Intent to Apply:*** This is not a requirement to apply for the project. Additionally, submitting a “Notice of Intent to Apply” does not obligate a potential applicant to apply. If the need arises, the funders could use this information to disseminate additional information to potential applicants. The proposed applicant’s contact person for the proposal should send an email with the subject line, “Notice of Intent to Apply” to [julie.huber@state.tn.us](mailto:julie.huber@state.tn.us) with their name, the name of the provider agency, mailing address and phone number. Please send this information by July 30, 2008.

---

<sup>2</sup> If an organization has been formed by two or more Tennessee DMRS Providers of Day Services the following applies. If each of the organizations would have qualified under this provision before they merged and if the new organization has provided day services from its first day then the organization is eligible. If the organizations were independent entities at the time of the *DMRS 2007 Employment Data Report*, the applicant may cite the employment rate for each independent entity at the time of the report or the applicant may submit the raw data for the newly formed organization.

<sup>3</sup> The hourly wage and average hours worked per week are expected to be provided for at least 90% of the people the applicant reports as being employed.

***Purpose of Project:***

- To build the capacity of Tennessee DMRS Providers of Day Services to structure time in community-based day services in a manner that leads to an increase in the number of people served by DMRS who are in competitive, integrated employment.
- To result in systems change within the agencies participating in the project.
- To provide people who receive DMRS -funded day services with opportunities to explore employment.

***Due Date:*** The original and eight copies of the proposal must be received by 5:00 p.m. Central on August 18, 2008. If submitting raw employment data, send four copies of the data with (but not attached to) the proposal. Send all documents to:

Julie Huber  
State Director of Day Services  
Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation Services  
Andrew Jackson Building  
500 Deaderick Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Julie's phone number is (615) 532-6540 and her email is [julie.huber@state.tn.us](mailto:julie.huber@state.tn.us). Additionally, you must email Julie both the narrative portion of your proposal and the completed budget forms for your proposal by 5:00 p.m. Central on August 18, 2008.

***Questions:*** Contact Julie or your Regional DMRS Day Services Coordinator:

Jim Walker  
DMRS West  
901-745-7661  
[jim.walker@state.tn.us](mailto:jim.walker@state.tn.us)

Tina Rachael  
DMRS East  
865-588-0508 x136  
[tina.rachael@state.tn.us](mailto:tina.rachael@state.tn.us)

John Knox  
DMRS Middle  
615-231-5028  
[john.knox@state.tn.us](mailto:john.knox@state.tn.us)

***How to Structure the Application:***

- Cover Page
- Letter of Commitment from Applicant
- If there is a subcontractor, a Letter of Commitment from the subcontractor
- Narrative Portion of the Proposal
- Letters of Commitment from ISC Agencies and DMRS Providers of Day Services that have agreed to be technical assistance and training recipients
- Attach the résumés of the *Discovery Trainer(s)* and their supervisor(s)
- Budget

If applicable, provide the raw data that substantiates that at least 20% of the people the applicant supports who are DMRS service recipients and who are supported by the applicant in Day Services are in community, integrated employment. Only applicants who are not using the data in the *DMRS 2007 Employment Data Report* need to provide this raw data. Refer to *Eligibility Criteria* for raw data requirements. Do not attach the raw data to the application, but include it separately in the application package.

**Application Requirements:**

The narrative must not exceed 15 pages. The narrative (except for charts) should be double-spaced and in a 12 point font. The cover page, letters of commitment, budget forms, and raw data are not considered as part of the Narrative and do not count against the 15 page limitation nor do they need to be double-spaced and in a 12 point font.

The maximum available points for application are 100. Only 90 points are possible for applicants that do not include an ISC Agency as a subcontractor. Refer to *Competitive Priorities* for additional information.

**Competitive Priorities:** A total of **10 priority points** are available. **Five points** will be awarded to applications that include an ISC Agency as a subcontractor.

**Five additional points** will be awarded to projects where the ISC Agency represents a wide diversity of providers. In keeping with this intent, if the applicant is the provider of day services for over 50% of the people represented by the ISC Agency, the application will not merit the **5 additional priority points**.

**Budget:** Please complete and attach the budget forms.

**Minimum Expectations of Goals:** Consult this section, *Minimum Expectations of Goals*, when addressing the instructions in *How to Structure the Narrative*.

Each award must commit to train a minimum of 150 staff. Each award will be expected, at minimum, to provide regular and ongoing training and technical assistance to a total of 8 agencies. The 8 agencies will be the result of a combination of Individual Support Coordination Agencies (ISCs) and DMRS Providers of Day Services.

If the applicant does not include an ISC Agency as a subcontractor, the applicant must provide training to 7 other entities besides their own agency. If the applicant includes an ISC Agency as a subcontractor, the project will have to provide training and technical assistance to 6 other entities besides their own agency and their partner ISC Agency.

If one applicant applies for both awards, the applicant will need to commit to train a minimum of 300 staff and 16 agencies. In the circumstance where one applicant applies for both awards and does not have a subcontractor, the applicant must provide training to 15 agencies in addition to their own agency. In the circumstance where one applicant applies for both awards with a subcontractor, they must provide training to 14 agencies in addition to their agency and their subcontractor ISC Agency.

At a minimum, training will be delivered to all of the following:

- All day and residential direct support professionals in participating DMRS provider agencies
- The immediate supervisors of day and residential direct support professionals in participating DMRS provider agencies
- All internal QA staff of the participating DMRS provider agencies
- All ISC Coordinators and supervisory staff of participating ISC Agencies

The training will be provided to DMRS Providers of Day Services and ISC Agencies at the same time. This will promote the opportunity for people to share best practices and learn from one another.

In the first 30 days of the project, each applicant and each DMRS Provider of Day Services that has committed to be a recipient of training and technical assistance of this project must identify either 8-10 of the people they serve or 10% of the people they serve (whichever is less) to participate in the project. All of the people who participate must be DMRS service recipients. If the applicant is applying for both awards, the minimum commitment will be that 16-20 people served by the applicant's organization or 20% of the people served by the applicant's organization (whichever is less) will participate in the project.

**Staffing Expectations:** Key personnel are defined as the *Discovery Trainer (s)* and their supervisor (s). The supervisor (s) must have the knowledge and experience in the provision/oversight of community-based services and employment-based services to provide the *Discovery Trainer* with quality guidance and technical assistance.

The *Discovery Trainer (s)* will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the project funders to develop training materials, tools and resources;
- Developing and implementing a training schedule;
- Developing and implementing training that addresses the project's purpose ( Refer to *Purpose of the Project*)
- Securing training sites;
- Providing training and technical assistance to participating Providers of Day Services and ISC Agencies;
- Identifying other sources of training and expertise that will serve to further the goals of the project;
- Submitting monthly reports to the project funders;
- Ensuring that the project is meeting all of its goals and objectives;

The résumés of the *Discovery Trainer(s)* and their supervisor(s) must be attached to the proposal. Because the goal of this project is systems change, the *Discovery Trainer (s)* must be dedicated to collaborating with the project funders to address barriers and develop innovative solutions.

In projects without a subcontractor, it will be a requirement that at least 30% (or 12 hours a week) of the person's time will be devoted to being the *Discovery Trainer*. In projects where there is a subcontractor, the 12 hours may be divided between the *Discovery Trainer* who works for the applicant and the *Discovery Trainer* who works for the ISC Agency.

In an application that applies for both awards, the minimum expectations will double to at least 24 hours per week. For example, if an applicant for both awards has a subcontractor, the 24 hours may be divided as outlined in the previous paragraph.

**Training Materials:** Attached is a power point that is the basis for *Discovery* as well as a document called *Discovery as It Pertains to Employment*. Use these materials as the starting points for addressing *Section Three of the Narrative*. While this application does not expect applicants to submit a curriculum, applicants should use *Section Three* to elaborate on how they would supplement these materials with other resources and tools.

## **Letters of Commitment:**

### ***Applicant Letter of Commitment***

- Attach immediately after cover page
- Must be written on agency letterhead and signed by the person with signatory authority for the organization. The letter must contain:
  - The number of years the applicant has been a Tennessee DMRS Provider of Day Services.
  - A statement that at least 20% of the people the applicant supports who are DMRS service recipients and who are supported by the applicant in Day Services are in community, integrated employment. Specify if the applicant's data source is the *DMRS 2007 Employment Data Report* or if the applicant has submitted other employment data for their agency with this proposal.
  - The amount of money the applicant is requesting
  - If applying for the *Competitive Priorities*, state if the applicant is applying for 5 or 10 priority points. To earn the complete 10 points, the letter of commitment from the subcontractor must demonstrate the required diversity of providers as described in *Competitive Priorities*.
  - If including a subcontractor, the amount of money budgeted for the subcontractor
  - The number and titles of the applicant's employees who will be participating in this training on a regular and ongoing basis. Refer to *Minimum Expectations of Goals* for minimum expectations of who is to be trained.
  - What DMRS Region (s) the applicant proposes to serve
  - The number of employees from ISC Agencies and DMRS Providers of Day Services who will be participating in this project.
  - A commitment that 8-10 of the people served by their organization or 10% of the people served by the applicant's organization (whichever is less) will participate in the project. If the applicant is applying for both awards, the minimum commitment will be that 16-20 people served by the applicant's organization or 20% of the people served by the applicant's organization (whichever is less) will participate in the project. All of the people who participate must be DMRS service recipients.
  - The amount of time that the *Discovery Trainer* and their supervisor will commit on a weekly basis to the project. (Refer to *Staffing Expectations* for specific time and job description requirements.)

### ***Subcontractor Letter of Commitment***

- If addressing the *Competitive Priority*, attach a letter of commitment from the subcontracting ISC Agency immediately after the *Applicant Letter of Commitment*.
- Must be written on agency letterhead and signed by the person with signatory authority for the organization. The letter must contain:
  - The amount of money the subcontractor is budgeted for in the application.
  - The number and titles of the subcontractor's employees who will be participating in this training on a regular and ongoing basis. Refer to *Minimum Expectations of Goals* for minimum expectations of who is to be trained.
  - A list of the agencies providing day services to the people represented by the ISC Agency and the number of people served by the ISC Agency who receive day services from each provider agency. (If applying for the *Competitive Priorities*, state if the applicant is applying for 5 or 10 priority points. To earn the complete

- 10 points, the letter of commitment from the subcontractor must demonstrate the required diversity of providers as described in *Competitive Priorities*.)
- The amount of time that the *Discovery Trainer* and their supervisor will commit on a weekly basis to the project. (Refer to *Staffing Expectations* for specific time and job description requirements.)

***Letters of Commitment from DMRS Day Service Providers and ISC Agencies That Will Be Training and Technical Assistance Recipients***

***DMRS Day Service Providers***

- Attach immediately after the *Narrative* portion of the proposal
- Must be written on agency letterhead and signed by the person with signatory authority for the organization. The letter must contain:
  - The number and titles of the organization's employees who will be participating in this training on a regular and ongoing basis. Refer to *Minimum Expectations of Goals* for minimum expectations of who is to be trained.
  - A commitment that 8-10 of the people served by their organization or 10% of the people served by the applicant's organization (whichever is less) will participate in the project. All of the people who participate must be DMRS service recipients.

***ISC Agencies***

- Attach immediately after the *Narrative* portion of the proposal
- Must be written on agency letterhead and signed by the person with signatory authority for the organization. The letter must contain:
  - The number and titles of the organization's employees who will be participating in this training on a regular and ongoing basis. Refer to *Minimum Expectations of Goals* for minimum expectations of who is to be trained.

***How to Structure The Narrative:***

The Narrative portion of each application must be structured in the following manner and address ***each bullet***.

- **Section One: Experience:** Demonstrate that the applicant and, if meeting the Competitive Priority, their ISC Agency subcontractor : **(30 Points)**
  - Will train the minimum number people as required by this proposal. Provide a list of all participating DMRS Day Service Providers and ISC Agencies (including the applicant and, if meeting the *Competitive Priority*, the subcontractor) and the number and the titles of the people participating from each agency. For example:
    - ABC DMRS Day Service Provider Agency, Total of 20 staff participating
      - Day Service Direct Support Staff – 7
      - Residential Direct Support Staff – 7
      - Day Service Supervisors – 2
      - Residential Supervisors – 3
      - QA Staff – 1

- Possess a demonstrated history of providing or coordinating community-based day services that promote inclusion, independence and productivity. To accomplish this, provide examples how time in community-based day services have allowed people to develop their skills and abilities to develop greater opportunities for inclusion, independence and productivity.
  - Possess a demonstrated history of delivering or coordinating services that result in people securing and maintaining community, integrated employment in a wide array of jobs with a wide array of employers. Be specific, give examples.
  - Possess a demonstrated history of developing relationships with community employers that have resulted in people securing and maintaining employment. Be specific, give examples. (Pertains to applicant organization only)
  - Have incorporated *Employment First!* into their current service delivery model.
  - Possess a history of delivering or coordinating services that allow people to discover if they are interested in employment.
  - Describe how time in community-based day services has lead to people securing community, integrated employment. (Pertains to applicant organization only)
- **Section Two: Key Personnel:** Describe the qualifications of the project’s key personnel. (30 Points)

Projects not addressing the *Competitive Priority* must have a minimum of 2 key personnel. Key Personnel are defined as the *Discovery Trainer (s)* and their supervisor (s). Résumés for key personnel must be attached to the proposal and should substantiate the narrative in this section. Projects addressing the *Competitive Priority* must have a minimum of 4 key personnel. In addition to the applicant addressing the bullets presented below, projects addressing the *Competitive Priority*, also need to address the bullet points for ISC Agency staff by replacing the word “delivering” with “coordinating”.

- Identification of the specific person who will be the *Discovery Trainer (s)*
  - Describe their experience in delivering community-based services and employment-based services;
  - Describe their history of delivering services to assist people to secure and maintain employment (give specific examples);
  - The length of time they have spent delivering community-based services and employment-based services;
  - Their experiences delivering community-based services to increase independence, productivity and inclusion (give specific examples);
- Identification of the person who will supervise the *Discovery Trainer (s)*
  - Describe their experience in delivering community-based and employment-based services;
  - Describe their history of delivering or coordinating services to assist people to secure and maintain employment (give specific examples);
  - The length of time they have spent delivering community-based services and employment-based services;
  - Their experiences delivering community-based services to increase independence, productivity and inclusion (give specific examples);



- **Section Three: Training and Technical Assistance:** Refer to *Minimum Expectations of Goals* to guide the formation of this Section. Present a plan for developing and implementing training and technical assistance in the applicant's selected DMRS Region (s), by addressing:(**30 Points**)
  - Provide a detailed description of how the applicant, and, if applicable, the subcontractor, will work to prepare in the initial stages of the project period to develop supplementary resources and tools to the *Discovery* power point and the document called *Discovery As It Relates to Employment*;
  - A training schedule that includes training goals, specifically the number of providers and ISC Agencies that will be trained in the project period (must be substantiated by the letters of commitment);
  - How the project will develop and implement a strategy to promote clear and regular communication between the person, their Circle of Support, ISC Agencies, residential staff, employment staff, community-based staff, and facility-based staff regarding structuring services to assist an individual to explore employment and, if they choose, to pursue employment;
  - How the project will deliver individual technical assistance to people who have attended the training;
  - How the project will evaluate the effectiveness and results of training and technical assistance on the people and organizations that have gone through the training;

## **Background**

This section is for informational purposes only and is attended to assist in the writing of the proposal. Do not cut and paste from this section, rather incorporate the concepts into your proposed service delivery model.

The Discovery Process was developed in response to requests for clarification about how time in community-based day services is to be utilized. However, by calling this effort “The Discovery Process,” people often think of it as something that has a definite starting point and stopping point. To remedy this, the word “Process” will be dropped. This should clarify that *Discovery* never ends – people never stop discovering their potential.

*Discovery* is just what it sounds like – structuring time in community-based day services to allow someone to discover their skills, interests and talents. *Discovery as It Relates to Employment* is structuring time in community-based day services to allow someone to discover if they are interested in working. Additionally, if the person is interested in working, this time is used to help them to discover what type of work they are interested in.

CMS’ tenet of “productivity, inclusion and independence” is at the core of Day Services. Disability is often an isolating condition that, at its very least, leads even the most optimistic person with a disability to feel different and separate. Inclusion in the community, not separation, develops a person’s potential for productivity (work or volunteering); inclusion (establishing friendships); and independence (the ability to realize one’s own talents and abilities).

The fundamental importance of the development and implementation of quality, customized services is reflected in the *DMRS Concept Paper* of January 19, 2007 which warns against the tendency to plug people into programs rather than spending the time to develop and implement quality ISPs that are created through strong person-centered planning. The *DMRS Concept Paper* also states:

The Developmental Disabilities Act (Public Law 106-402) includes expectations that “Services must be designed to maximize the potential of each individual...” Supports must be “individualized” and promote opportunities for “self-determination, independence, productivity and integration/inclusion in all facets of community life. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expects that “Services and supports are planned and effectively implemented in accordance with each participant’s unique needs, expressed preferences and decisions concerning his/her life in the community”. . .

Individual Support Planning and Implementation promotes community inclusion, personal independence and productivity. Individuals acquire, retain or improve skills that decrease dependence on others in natural settings, use generic community resources and involving mutual interaction with non-disabled peers so they may become fully included members of their communities. Individuals receive support from staff to participate in everyday tasks to the greatest degree possible instead of receiving custodial care where much is done for them by others.

Often, the term “intellectual disabilities” can carry the unfortunate connotation that people are not capable of learning. Of course, as experienced professionals, we all know that people with intellectual disabilities are quite capable of learning. By providing day services to people, we are in effect, taking responsibility for influencing one of the most critical parts of their lives – their

day. With this responsibility comes the obligation to assist people to live their lives in a manner that allows them to realize their potential.

So often, the people whom we serve have had a very limited experience of the community. An immense part of our responsibility is to find thoughtful ways to be ambassadors to life in the community for the people we serve. Think of the last time a friend from another state came to visit you. Where did you take them? You took them to places and events you thought they would find meaning and enjoyment in.

Our obligation is to help people discover what they are good at. When you find something you are good at, you also find a sense of belonging – a sense that many people with disabilities have seldom experienced in the community. Without this sense of belonging and contribution, people may experience a sense of separateness that can lead to isolation, depression and behaviors. Regardless of our backgrounds, we all yearn to be “a part of” and not “apart from” life.